



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

Mountain  
Plains  
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard  
Denver, CO 80204

Reply to  
Attn. of: SP 94-C-35

NOV 8 1993

Subject: Meal Substitutions for Handicapped Children

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri ED,  
(Special Nutrition Programs) Montana OPI, Nebraska ED, North Dakota,  
South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming ED

As you know, schools and institutions which operate USDA school nutrition programs are required to make substitutions/alterations in the regular meal patterns for those children in attendance who are considered handicapped under 7 CFR 15b and whose handicaps restrict their diets. Similarly, substitutions may be made for children who are not handicapped under 7 CFR 15b, but who are unable to consume the regular meal due to medical or other special dietary needs.

Senator Robert Dole recently expressed concern, in remarks attached herein, that many parents or guardians of handicapped children are unaware of these requirements and of the potential benefits for their children. This lack of awareness by parents and guardians may, to some extent, reflect insufficient or inaccurate understanding of the requirements by some local school food authority personnel. We therefore strongly encourage State agencies to offer guidance and training, as necessary, to their SFAs in this area. The regulatory citation for these requirements is 210.10 (i) (1) for the National School Lunch Program, and 220.8 (f) for the School Breakfast Program, and further guidance is to be found in Instruction 783-2, Revision 1, published 6-6-88.

For State agencies which wish to offer their school food authorities examples of language which can be used at the local level to inform the parents and guardians of handicapped children about meal substitutions/alterations, the following is offered: "If a child has been determined by a doctor to be handicapped and the handicap would prevent the child from eating the regular school meal, this school will make any substitution prescribed by the doctor. If a substitution is needed, there will be no extra charge for the meal. If you believe your child needs substitutions because of a handicap, please get in touch with us for further information."

Please contact our office if you have any questions.

*Ann C. Hector*  
ANN C. HECTOR  
for Regional Director  
Special Nutrition Programs

Attachment